

Message Text

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AMCONSULATE MUNICH

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TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS ON NEW US PRESIDENT

VIENNA FOR FBIS

REF: PRAGUE 1912

1. FOLLOWING ATTEMPT TO PASS THE WORD ABOUT FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON'S WATERGATE DIFFICULTIES IN RECENT DAYS (REFTEL), CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS OVER AUGUST 10-11 WEEKEND AND ON MONDAY AUGUST 12 PROVIDED READERS WITH DETAILED FACTUAL REPORTING OF EVENTS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING AND LEADING TO NIXON'S RESIGNATION AND SWEARING IN OF PRESIDENT FORD.

2. THIS REPORTING, HOWEVER, WAS ACCOMPANIED IN MANY PAPERS BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMMENTARY OF ONE OR MORE MAJOR THEMES. THE

FIRST STRESSED THAT ALTHOUGH A NEW US PRESIDENT IS IN OFFICE, BOTH THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION ARE STILL ON THE PATH TOWARDS DETENTE. AS PROOF OF UNCHANGED US POLICY IN THIS AREA, MUCH IS MADE IN SEVERAL ARTICLES OF PRESIDENT FORD'S SPECIFIC REQUEST TO SECRETARY KISSINGER THAT HE REMAIN AS SECRETARY OF STATE, OF THE LATTER'S INTENTION TO DO SO, AND OF SOVIET INTENTION TO CARRY ON WITH DENTE-BUILDING. THE SECOND THEME INCORPORATED THE ALREADY-TABLED PRESS NOTION OF PREVIOUS DAYS THAT WATERGATE BY AND LARGE REPRESENTED A NOW-SUCCESSFUL PLOY OF ANTI-DENTE FORCES TO UNSEAT A PRESIDENT NOT OF THEIR LIKING. FINALLY, SOME OF THE PRESS HIT UPON A DEDUCTION THAT WATERGATE TYPIFIES AN ALLEGED SCANDALOUS POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MILIEU IN THE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE UNITED STATES WHERE, AS RUDE PROVO WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT MILOS KREJCI PUTS IT IN AUGUST 12 RP, "THE AVERAGE AMERICAN'S... HOPES ARE CRUMBLING... HE GIVES IN TO HOPELESSNESS AND DESPAIR ... AND THE 'HAVES' ARE ENRICHING THEMSELVES AT THE EXPENSE OF WORKERS AND CONSUMERS."

3. COMMENT: VIEWED IN ITS ENTIRETY, PRESS COVERAGE CONTAINS FEW SURPRISES AND SHOWS EMPHASIS ON CZECHOSLOVAK VIEW THAT RELATIONS AMONG COUNTRIES NEED NOT CHANGE THOUGH LEADERSHIP HAS. HOWEVER, ALL PAPERS HAVE NOT BEEN SAYING ALL THINGS. THE DIFFERENCES ARE NOTABLE, SUCH AS SLOVAK COMMUNIST PARTY PRAVDA'S ALMOST TOTAL RESTRAINT FROM PRINTING ANYTHING OTHER THAN HARD NEWS WHILE AUGUST 10 ZEMEDEL'SKY NOVINY (AGRICULTURAL NEWS) HITS MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL NIXON OPPONENTS

AND SAME DAY'S MLADA FRONTA (YOUTH FRONT) CALLS NIXON'S RESIGNATION A CLEVER PLOY TO ASSURE PRESIDENTIAL PENSION AND AVOID CRIMINAL PROSECUTION FOR ILLEGAL WATERGATE DEEDS. OTHER THAN PRIME MINISTER STROGAL'S CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT FORD, NOTHING HAS YET BEEN MENTIONED IN PRESS OF BILATERAL US-CSSR RELATIONS. OUR ASSUMPTION IS, HOWEVER, THAT READERS WILL LEARN BEFORE VERY LONG THAT CZECHOSLOVAKIA, LIKE THE USSR, CONSIDERS THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AS A FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT, NOT INDIVIDUALS. PERRY

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